

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #2]

[ORIGINAL?] MSS. OR FIELD NOTES (Check one)

PUB. Living Lore in New England

TITLE Italian Cobbler, Beverly - #2 (M.R. Lovett)

DATE 11/30/38 WDS. PP. 5

CHECKER DATE

SOURCES GIVEN (?) Interview with Vito Cacciola

COMMENTS

Name: Merton R. Lovett

(original)

11/30/38 Conn. [??]

Paper No. 2

INTERVIEW

WITH

VITO CACCIOLA

1

Page 1 INTERVIEW WITH VITO CACCIOLA

Library of Congress

by Merton R. Lovett

"Why, Mr. Lovett, I hope I finda you happy.

"I hava cold, but I can work, thanks be to God.

"No. The doctor, what for? When I hava de doctor

Wednesday, Thursday, I needa de priest.

"I maka my own medicine. Tonight two aspirins in some hotta whiskey and lemon. In de morning I feela fine.

"If you lika de doctor, you have him. Maybe he's O.K. The doctor give you medicine to cura your cold.

At de same time he sneeze in your face. Perhaps he can't cura his, cold.

"Sure de doctors gotta eat. But I no buy dere spaghetti.

"Hah, Hah, you gotta me there. I doctor de sick shoes, but I hava hole in my own. So perhaps I'm not a good shoe doctor?

"Yes, but I fixa de shoes too nice. For little boys, I fixa de soles too good. De leather too tough, they geta whiskers on de cheek before dey come back.

2

Page 2

"I menda dis shoe for little Marie, What? Now you're a kidding me. It won't be no gooda thirty years more for her little granddaughter.

"Thar shoe's very bad. I gotta scolda Angela.

Library of Congress

She dance a hole in de sole so big as her hand. Maybe Now I can't fix it. De little holes I can menda it easy. De big hole spoila de innersole and de stocking, and I no can fix right.

"In English you calla de heart de soul. De shoes have different soles. De are mucha like de men and women.

See this a very fine sole, good leather. Dey name it 'Rock Oak.' It costa me forty five cents. It's clean and strong lika de soul of an honest man. But here's a cheap sole for a low price. See the scratches and de brand.

It's weak and wears out quick like de soul of liar. And de souls of bad peoples have brands, the Devil's brands.

"I believe most people good. Are we not all the children of God? But the Lord hava some very bad sons.

Now I watcha dem close before I trusta them.

"Once I think everybody good. I got dissapoint.

"Yes, dissalussioned, that's it.

3

"One time a thief sella me some papers, what you call stock. He talka like a lawyer. He say his compance got gold from de ocean, de salt water. In de sea was almost as much gold as salt. Enough maybe to gild all the church alters and fill all de banks.

"Dividends? Oh, I never get enough gold to fixa me a tooth. He taka my sixty dollars. De stock I couldn't sell for enough to buy a gross of shoe laces.

"Yes, I meeta many fine men. I tell you about one, a prince. In 1926 I coma back from a visit to Italy on a ship. When I reacha New York, de officers take too mucha money

Library of Congress

because I bring home some presents. I land in New York and find only \$8.70 cents in my pocket.

"Yes, I buy a ticket all right. It costs \$8.00 to Boston. From Boston to Beverly is sixty six cents more.

"No, I didn't eat. I have breakfast on the boat.

I take the train in afternoon. I sit in the seat and look out of the window. Soon a man asks me may he sit beside me. Yes, I said, please do. Sometime he starts to talk.

I tell him about my trip. He tells me he is a salesman for shoes. So we talk about leather and music and sometimes books and religion.

"When it gets dark, this gentleman says, 'I am going to eat some dinner in the dining car. I will have some steak and some apple pie. Won't you eat some too?'

"My mouth what you call it waters. My belly shuts up like the accordion. But I say, No, I thank you, but I cannot eat now, I have a much bigger dinner.

"When he comes back, he says, 'I have had a good dinner. I'm sorry you couldn't enjoy it too.' Then he gives me a handsome cigar. But I puff two, three times and feel sick.

"Then he asks what time I get home in Beverly. I tell him eleven o'clock. So he said, 'I suppose you eat supper in Boston.' No, I say. Then when he tells me I should not starve, I say I have no money.

"When he hears that, this gentleman takes a roll of money from his pockets. It was a big roll like that. I never saw the like, tens and fifties. Then he hands me two dollars and asks will I take it as a loan.

Library of Congress

"No, I said, I cannot. I couldn't accept money from a stranger. But he replied that he was not a stranger any 5 more and lived in Salem. He gave me his card.

"I say no some more. I never lika de debt. But I thanked him for his kindness and goodness.

"At last I tooka de two dollars. I felt it would be ungracious to refuse.

"He lefta de train at Providence and I tella him I would see him soon in Salem.

"No, I didn't buy no supper in Boston, I couldn't eat. My joy was too great. My hunger fly away. I know that I have met one of God's true gentlemen.

"The next Monday I taka the card and go to Salem.

I find de shoe factory. I go into de big office. A dozen girls are working on typewriters. I ask de clerk, can I see Mr. Hepburn and giva her my name. Then she show me into another office.

"We shake hands and I giva Mr. Hepburn the money.

I say I am a returning you the same two dollars you loaned me. He says, 'What, you didn't eata any supper?' I say, no, my heart is too full of joy. I losa my appetite when I think of his kindness and trust.

"Yes, he was a great man. I meeta few like him. Soon it is Christmas. Always I senda him a card. Let me showa you to it, I gota it already."